

FOR RELEASE IMMEDIATE

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## GOVERNOR BARBOUR SETS SPECIAL SESSION FOR MAY 21, 2008

Jackson, Mississippi – Governor Haley Barbour said Friday he will call Mississippi lawmakers to the State Capitol for a Special Session beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 2008, to consider re-authorizing the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and other subjects.

“It is critical that the Mississippi Department of Employment Security be reauthorized,” Governor Barbour said. MDES has been recognized as among the best in the nation at placing job applicants and its one-stop system has been praised as among the most efficient and effective in the nation.

“Failure to reauthorize would mean unemployed Mississippians can not receive their benefits; businesses will see their unemployment insurance tax rates multiply dramatically; the State will lose millions of dollars in federal grants; and our community colleges will see the loss of workforce investment dollars that are helping train Mississippians for new and higher-paying jobs,” Governor Barbour said.

“It would be unthinkable for Mississippi’s employers to have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes or for beneficiaries to be denied services because MDES is hamstrung by a totally unrelated issue,” Governor Barbour said.

Over the past four years Mississippi’s job-creating programs have resulted in a net gain of more than 60,000 new jobs, attributable at least in part to the solid successes at MDES.

Governor Barbour said filling a fiscal hole in the Mississippi Medicaid program will not be in the initial call because work on the best solution is continuing; it is anticipated that Medicaid will be added to the call next week.

“I’m grateful to the Medicaid Hospital Advisory Board, the Mississippi Hospital Association and the Division of Medicaid for their joint efforts to revise the methodology by which state match funds are generated so it is as beneficial and fair as possible to the state’s hospitals,” Governor Barbour said.

Other than MDES and Medicaid, Governor Barbour said he would also ask the Legislature to:

- Improve a metal recycling bill (HB 1136) that was vetoed on May 12;
- Prohibit the expansion of gaming beyond counties that either now have it or have approved it in the past;
- Make technical adjustments to current law allowing toll roads, including enforceability of collecting tolls.

Since the Legislature will be working on mandatory items, Governor Barbour said it is possible that other items could be added to the call.

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